

several instances of display on this day the bird offering the food bobbed its head and body up and down as it faced the other bird. The second barbet bobbed up as the first bobbed down. The display continued at a rate of two bobs per second for four or five seconds. On the next day a single barbet was seen in the tree most of the time, and no displays were seen in four hours. The only vocalization heard from the barbets was a soft "churr" given after a Little Banded Goshawk (*Accipiter badius*) flew into the nearest tree. The pair of barbets roosted together in the nest this night even though the behaviour of the birds suggested that incubation had begun. One flew into the hole shortly after sunset and peered out at intervals, and the second bird joined it 20 minutes later. The two barbets were collected in late afternoon on the following day.

The nest hole was round and only slightly larger than a barbet. From the opening a tunnel slanted in and down at a 30° angle with the limb. At a depth of ten inches the tunnel broadened into a pear-shaped nest chamber, which was eight inches deep and four inches in diameter. In cross section this chamber was similar to two overlapping circles of the same size as a pair of vertical ridges partially partitioned the cavity. The floor was covered with fine chips of wood.

The four slightly glossy, white eggs measured 23.2 x 17.7 mm., 22.7 x 17.6 mm., 24.0 x 17.6 mm., and 22.7 x 17.7 mm. Two eggs weighed 3.8 and 3.7 gm. The eggs showed well-developed primitive streaks on the surface of the yolk, indicating that they had been incubated for 24 to 48 hours.

The male barbet weighed 43.4 gm. and the female 48.0 gm. Both had bark beetles in their stomachs: one bird was seen to catch flying beetles in the air from its perch on the nest tree. The yellow face of the female was stained with mulberry juice, and in the lower intestine of the male were two pits of drupe fruits about 3 mm. in diameter. These fruits came from a green, leafless, herbaceous vine known in the Lovale language as "Iwa-vava". The testes measured 6 x 5 and 4.5 x 4 mm. The ovary showed only small whitish follicles of 2 mm. or smaller and also four post-ovulatory follicles ranging in length from 2 mm. to 4 mm. These corresponded in number and size to a clutch in which the last egg was ovulated two days previously.

References:

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Some Antillean coots (*Fulica*) in the Cambridge University and British Museums

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Recently Brodkorb (1965) described *Fulica podagrica*, "of apparently late Pleistocene age", from Barbados, West Indies. He drew attention to the need to re-examine the specimen from that island reported as *F. americana* by Feilden (1889), which, however, he thought "may no longer be in existence". This was therefore among the specimens I sought on my recent visit to England, made possible by a grant from the Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund of the American Museum of Natural History.

Fortunately Mr. C. W. Benson discovered this historic bird in the Cambridge University collection, and was so kind as to bring it to London along with two other coots of interest. Here I compared them with the series in the British Museum (Natural History). The latter also has a Barbados coot, taken by Schomburg and determined, along with two from Grenada, as *F. caribaea*, by James Bond; unfortunately all three are unsexed. Feilden's bird is a ♂ taken 11th August 1888 in Graeme-Hall Swamp.

The two Barbados *Fulica* and the St. Vincent ♀ (C. E. Lister in Cambridge University collection) are evidently normal *caribaea*. I perceive no difference from *F. a. americana* except the frontal shield. The supposed difference in the colour of the outer web of the outer primary (Ridgway and Friedmann, 1941:222) I cannot appreciate. The other two *F. caribaea*, from Grenada, have rather large feet, which is of particular interest since the heavy foot characterizes *F. podagrica*. This is more a matter of thickness than of length; they have the tarsus 63 mm. (both birds), the middle toe without claw 74.5 and 77.5 mm. The tarsometatarsus impresses me as heavy, but I cannot measure the bone in the skin. The maximum depth of the scalation, in the central part of the tarsus, is 10.6 and 9.5 mm., compared to a maximum of 9.2 or a bit more in ♂ *F. a. americana*. The Barbados *caribaea* measure 8.0 (♂) and 9.0; the St. Vincent ♀ about 8.3 mm. (All the specimens discussed herein are in adult, definitive plumage.) A series of skeletons of known age, sex, and external measurements should be instructive.

The third Cambridge University *Fulica* compared is a ♀ from Greenock, St. Ann's, Jamaica, April 1859 (W. Osburn No. 105). It was recorded as *F. americana* by P. L. Sclater (1861:81), but this was before variation in Antillean coots had been worked out and the reference was transferred without explanation by Ridgway and Friedmann (1941:221) to the supposed race *F. a. grenadensis*. The frontal shield is, to be sure, quite swollen, as might be expected in April; but the bill (depth at base ca. 15.5 mm.) is actually less heavy than in many North American specimens, and is no more wrinkled. I can only call this specimen *F. a. americana* in any case. Ridgway and Friedmann call *grenadensis* "doubtfully distinct from *F. a. americana*", while Bond (1940) synonymizes it.

References:

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